

**Council on Postsecondary Education
July 30, 2001**

**New Program Approval
Associate in Applied Science in Early Childhood Education
Lexington Community College**

Action: The staff recommends that the council approve the program in early childhood education proposed by Lexington Community College.

The need for early childhood educators with associate degrees is increasing. The federal Head Start Act requires that by 2003 at least 50 percent of all teachers in center-based Head Start programs have at least an associate degree in early childhood education. Some local preschools and agencies have set a goal of 100 percent. Kentucky's HB 706 created a task force to improve and promote high-quality early childhood services. The plan includes incentives to upgrade staff training and provide scholarships for early childhood educators. Employment of preschool teachers and childcare workers is projected to increase faster than the average of all occupations through the year 2006.

The proposed program prepares students for employment as professionals in nursery schools, preschools, child care centers, after school programs, family child care homes, and family service agencies. The curriculum contains interdisciplinary early childhood education coursework, a general education component, and over 300 hours of work and observation in child care facilities. Individuals completing this program and meeting other eligibility requirements may earn a child development associate credential.

Through planning with the University of Kentucky Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education program, the entire curriculum of the associate degree will transfer to the baccalaureate degree program. LCC also requested review of the curriculum for articulation by public universities, the KCTCS, and the KYVU. Responses were received from ECU, the KCTCS, MoSU, and WKU. Responses indicate the LCC curriculum will articulate with their early childhood program degrees. UofL is changing its curriculum and could not offer an assessment. The curriculum meets the recommendations of the LCC Early Childhood Education Advisory Committee, which includes faculty from high schools, the KCTCS, and universities. The executive director of the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development supports the program as a part of the statewide strategy in early childhood education. The curriculum is consistent with the statewide requirements for early childhood educators, which are being developed by Kentucky's Early Childhood Professional Development Council.

LCC is an active participant in the KYVU. Students in LCC's ECE associate degree program may take all required general education courses through the KYVU. Both LCC's ECE program and the KCTCS' ECE program are based on guidelines developed by the Governor's Taskforce

on Early Childhood Education. A formal agreement for exchange of technical courses is anticipated upon completion of the KCTCS' ECE curriculum.

Using the Kentucky Postsecondary Program Proposal System, LCC posted the proposed program to the council's Web site. It was reviewed without objection by the other Kentucky public and independent institutions. The UK Board of Trustees approved the program at its April 3, 2001, meeting.

An overview of the program, prepared by LCC, is attached.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PROPOSED ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE DEGREE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

January 2001

In the fall 2001 semester, Lexington Community College proposes to begin an Early Childhood Education Program that leads to an Associate in Applied Science Degree. The proposed program is consistent with the mission of the college by offering an "associate degree program focused on career-oriented curricula," which is designed to produce early childhood educators at the associate degree level. A demand for this program has been established by requests from local educators, social service leaders, and the Lexington Community College Early Childhood Education Advisory Committee. Upon completion of this program of study requiring 62-65 credit hours in the curriculum, graduates will be prepared for employment as trained educators in nursery schools, preschools, child care centers, after school and school age programs, family child care homes, Home Visiting programs, and family service agencies.

Furthermore, the addition of this program is an appropriate next step in the University of Kentucky Lexington Community College's long-range goal of becoming an educational leader for the commonwealth of Kentucky and beyond. The program will support the strategic goals of Lexington Community College. Also, the program is consistent with the goals of the "Strategic Plan for Kentucky Higher Education, 1996-2000," namely: "developing an educated citizenry," "promoting state and local economic development," and "contributing to the commonwealth's global competitiveness." The Early Childhood Education program will support the goals of the *Kentucky Postsecondary Education Improvement Act of 1997* (1997 Special Session, HB 1) by providing the "training necessary to develop a workforce with the skills that meet the needs of new and existing industries." House Bill 1's mandates to "increase technical skills and professional expertise of Kentucky workers," "develop a pool of educated citizens to support the expansion of existing business and industry," and to "enhance the flexibility and adaptability of Kentucky workers in an ever-changing and global economy" are strongly supported.

Finally, at the federal level, Section 648A of the *Head Start Act* requires that by September 30, 2003, at least 50 percent of all Head Start teachers in center-based programs must have an associate, baccalaureate, or advanced degree in early childhood education or a degree in a related field with preschool teaching experience. Some local preschools and early childhood education agencies have set a goal of 100 percent.

Goals of the Associate in Applied Science Early Childhood Education Program

The primary goal of the Early Childhood Education Program is to prepare students for employment as professionals in a number of settings. The curriculum contains interdisciplinary early childhood education coursework and a general education component. Upon completion of the program, students will have over 300 contact hours with children and will have completed a professional portfolio of cumulative learning experiences. A child development associate credential may be earned by taking courses in this program and meeting separate eligibility requirements set forth by the National Council for Professional Recognition.

In addition to preparing students for immediate employment, the curriculum of the Associate in Applied Science Early Childhood Education Program is designed to transfer to institutions offering a baccalaureate degree in this field either through direct transfer of credit or through articulation. Lexington Community College faculty members worked collaboratively with the faculty members in the University of Kentucky Human Environmental Science Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education Program to achieve this goal. At this time the entire curriculum will transfer to the University of Kentucky Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education Program.

Curriculum

In order to complete the Associate in Applied Science degree in Early Childhood Education students must complete all core courses as well as a general education component. Students enrolled in the Early Childhood Education Program must achieve a minimum grade of "C" in each required Early Childhood Education course (EC and FAM prefixes) to qualify for graduation.

Alternate Delivery Strategies

As a college with a serious commitment to meeting our students' and the community's needs, LCC offers a full array of evening and weekend courses. In fact, of the 62-65 hours required for the ECE Program, **all** the general education courses are offered in both day and evening options. Additionally, the courses in the proposed ECE curriculum scheduled for Fall 2001, EC 120 and EC 170, have day and evening sections; EC 130 is the only course offered only during daytime hours this fall. It is our general practice to alternate programs' evening offerings so that all requirements are offered regularly in an evening format.

In addition, Lexington Community College will accept the general education courses offered via KYVU by LCC, KCTCS, or other regionally-accredited participating colleges and schools. The college will certainly work toward ease of transfer for appropriate courses in KCTCS's newly approved KYVU early childhood education program. LCC has a long-standing collaborative relationship with KYVU. From fall 1999 to spring 2001, over 500 LCC students took classes we offered through KYVU.

In addition, LCC will be offering part of the general education courses via KTLN in spring 2002 including MA 109, ENG 101, PY 110, and HIS 108. As the program matures, we will schedule EC courses via KTLN in evening hours. Finally, there are several telecourses offered by LCC and other colleges and universities within the state via KET that would also meet curricular requirements. Our commitment to alternative delivery methods is clearly demonstrated through our past record. Since fall 1999, nearly 1,100 students have taken classes LCC has offered through KYVU, by ITV, or through KET.